

Western harvest mouse (*Reithrodontomys megalotis*)



Taxonomy:

Family Cricetidae. Sixteen subspecies are recognized, including the regional form *Reithrodontomys megalotis megalotis*.

Description:

Small size, color grayish-brown above and paler below. Tail about as long as the head-body and faintly bicolored. Front surface of upper incisors grooved.

Total length: 118-170 mm; Tail:50-96 mm; Hind foot:15-18 mm; Ear: 12-15 mm; Weight:8-15 g.



Distribution:

Southwestern Canada south to southern Mexico, from California coastline east to the mid western US. Common locally at lower elevations along the Wasatch Front.

Ecology and diet:

Western harvest mouse typically occur in grassy and weedy habitats. They live in nests on the ground under heavy grasses or fallen logs. They are primarily seed eaters but also eat green plant material. Recent surveys indicate that their regional distribution and abundance

may be increasing with the rapid invasive expansion of cheatgrass and other non-native annual plants.

Life History:

Reproduction occurs from early spring to late autumn at higher elevations. Seasonally breeding females have multiple litters of 2-6 offspring each. Gestation length is 23-24 days and young are sexually mature at around 4 months. Average lifespan is less than 12 months.

References: Hall 1981; Webster & Jones 1982.